CITY OF
SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Memorandum

TO: MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK BETTER COMMITTEE

FROM: Lee Price

SUBJECT: CITY CLERK ONE-STOP AND AUTOMATION UPDATE

DATE: 10-14-04

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report and provide guidance and/or direction, as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

Previous Committee reports focused on the customer service survey results, the use of laptops at Council meetings to streamline the time required to prepare Minutes, and summarized progress made to-date on increasing access to information via the Internet. The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive status report on previously outstanding referrals and to update the Committee on the status of a new referral set forth in the Mayor's June 2004 Budget Message.

ANALYSIS

City Clerk Survey 2004

In the Mayor's June 2003 Budget Message, the City Clerk was directed to expand the City Clerk Customer Survey conducted in 2003 by asking questions related to customer service provided by different functions of the Clerk's Office. The 2004 City Clerk Customer Service survey questions were printed on postcards for ease of handling and for a user-friendly appearance. The questions were also posted on the City Clerk's website. Postcards were placed on the front counters of the City Clerk's Office and offered to all walk-in customers, whether internal or external. Postcards were also placed at the public table in the Council Chambers during two Council meetings in March of 2004. Letters were mailed with pre-addressed, postage prepaid postcards to approximately 700 recipients, including:

- Mayor and Council and their staff
- Board and Commission Members
- Registered lobbyists
- Local media
- City Clerk's Project Diversity Outreach List, which includes neighborhood associations.
- Departments frequently interacting with the City Clerk's Office.

TOTAL CARDS RECEIVED BACK: 163 (23% return)

The questions and responses are summarized below:

1) Please rate the overall **performance** of the City Clerk's Office in providing you with access to the information you need:

Excellent	Good	Just Average	Poor	Very Poor
70	70	14	9	0
43%	**43%**	**9%**	**5%**	**0%**

2) Please rate the overall **efficiency** of services delivered by the City Clerk's Office:

Very Efficient	Somewhat Efficient	Neither Efficient Nor Inefficient	Somewhat Inefficient	Very Inefficient
81	56	12	9	2
51%	**35%**	**7%**	**6%**	**1%**

3) If you accessed information or documents from the City Clerk's website, was the information you needed available when you needed it?

Yes, all info was available, on time	Most info was there	Didn't try or didn't need any	Very little info I needed	Nothing I looked for was there
34	60	43	11	10
22%	**38%**	**27%**	**7%**	**6%**

4) What services or information are you interested in from the City Clerk's Office?

Elections/ Campaign Filings	Council Agenda Documents	Municipal Code	Records/ Research	Boards/ Commns	Claims
34	85	45	59	80	7
11%	**27%**	**15%**	**19%**	**26%**	**2%**

Most survey cards did not have any voluntary comments provided, although there was room to do so. Comments provided are summarized as follows:

22	Provided positive and supportive feedback by expressing appreciation, kudos and/or compliments to the staff
11	Provided suggestions for improvement*****
11	Provided suggestions regarding matters not in the control/purview of the Office
4	Noted they never/rarely asked for services of the Office
3	Complained that they had not received good customer service at the Counter

*Specific suggestions for improvement included:

1) Send more information about board/commission vacancies

2) Send out information about board/commission vacancies sooner

3) Make Council meeting minutes available in a timely manner

4) Update the website regularly, include board/commission agendas/minutes, use less paper double-sided, make more information available electronically

5) Send more information out by email

6) Put everything on-line

7) Timeliness of Council Agenda/Minutes still needs work

8) The problem is not the Clerk's Office, but department staff unable to get reports out in a timely manner

9) Information is received too slowly…it's history by the time we hear about it

10) Search function is not helpful in finding things on agendas or in minutes

11) Need more interactive website and services.

Since the survey was conducted, there have been several improvements and/or enhancements, many of which will be discussed in greater detail in this report. To summarize, more information is being provided to prospective board/commission members in the way of added information in the recruitment offerings as well as more information posted on-line. Council meeting minutes are available sooner now that the preparation time has been shortened by the use of laptops and a more efficient, succinct format. More information is posted to the website and sent out via email to interested parties. Specific examples will follow.

Use of Laptops at Council Meetings

At your March 10, 2004 meeting, Deanna Santana (serving as Interim City Clerk at the time) provided the Committee with an update on the use of laptops at Council Meetings. The change was perceived as extremely positive and Minutes are being prepared much faster. After assuming the position of City Clerk, I began working with my staff to help them be even more efficient in recording the actions and drafting the Minutes. During what I would describe a short learning curve, Minutes were produced in about a four-week turnaround. This time frame has since improved and our goal is a turnaround time of three weeks. Synopses continue to be prepared, distributed and posted in a timely manner. Staff spend less time drafting and editing Minutes and, consequently, are now able to be cross-trained in other functions in the Office.

The Mayor's 2003 directive to restructure and reorganize has achieved the goal of producing Minutes with faster turnaround, improved accuracy, greater public accessibility and reduced costs.

Council Committee Reports on the Internet

Beginning in February 2004, collaborative efforts in the City Manager's Office resulted in achieving great success in posting Council Committee Agendas and the accompanying reports to the website. This accomplishment allows more access to the Council Committees and their work.

Web Based Services

Many new additions to the City Clerk's website include:

- More Council Memos are being posted to the Agendas
- Applications for Boards and Commissions
- Council Meeting Guide
- Claim (against the City) Forms
- Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest
- Agendas, reports and meeting notes of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Ethics
- New Lobbyist Registration and Disclosure Forms
- More information on Elections, including candidate campaign statements (as printed in the Voters' Sample Ballot)

Creating a more user-friendly "portal" to information via the website which will enable the public to view reports and/or download forms for easy access is a priority for this Office. This goal will further the desired outcome of improving accessibility by the public to the municipal legislative process. To succeed, priorities are being identified and established based upon what is it that the public wants most given our existing resources.

Project Management Software

In February, it was reported that the City Clerk's Office was looking into the use of project management software for election services. The need by this Office for greater automation in tracking election deadlines is not as high a priority as other pressing needs, therefore no further research has been done in this regard. New initiatives and priorities for automation are described below.

Office Automation Update

In the Mayor's June 2004 Budget Message, the Manager was directed to provide $85,000 to fund an immediate implementation of an aggressive automation and electronic filing system because the City Clerk has "the need for automation, training, software and equipment. Providing this funding will enable us to quickly streamline the agenda and minute processes, reduce a paper intensive system, provide cross training and begin electronic filing of important documents like campaign finance statements". In July, this Office began exploring several options for automation. It is noteworthy to mention that the funding available is not enough to accomplish all our automation goals, but it is an excellent start. Prudent consideration of costs and just what we choose to launch first is extremely important to ensure good decisions.

Council Agenda Process Automation:

One of the City's most critical processes greatly needs automation and that is the process by which the Council Agenda is duplicated, distributed and prepared for posting to the Internet. In an effort to find ways to streamline, reduce the amount of hand-collating (which is very labor-intensive) and ensure faster posting to the website, we considered the concept of "touch it once". This led to a pilot project with the City's contract photocopy service provider (Kinko's) to copy and simultaneously scan the Agenda and Council Memos. Although merit-worthy, the attempt was unsuccessful because Kinko's does not have the necessary software to "OCR" (optical character recognition), which allows one to search text among other things. The mere ability to scan (and create an image) just wasn't sufficient to meet the needs of the public and organization internally.

Enhancing and improving the Council Agenda process by greater use of automation and technology remains a top priority.   I am still attempting to negotiate a compromise arrangement with Kinko's. In the meantime we are scanning the Memos in-house while we continue to explore other ways to effectively achieve the original goal, particularly as we look towards the day we move to the New City Hall, when the old-fashioned way of distributing agenda-related information will no longer be practical, considering the distance between the Wing (Clerk's Office) and the Towers (Mayor, Council and City Manager's Office).

Campaign and Lobbyist Disclosure On-Line:

On-line access to, and eventually the ability to file on-line, campaign disclosure statements and lobbyist registration and disclosure forms would provide the public with easier access to much-desired information. Currently, campaign disclosure forms must be filed in the original, hard copy format, which requires either delivering the information personally or mailing it in prior to the filing deadline. The forms may be examined in the Office (which can take considerable time) and/or copies provided at the rate of ten cents per page (this fee is set by State Law). It takes significant staff time to prepare copies of campaign filings, particularly during busy election cycles. The new lobbyist registration forms are available on-line, but on-line filing is still not possible.

There are some issues to consider before launching on-line access to and/or on-line filing. They are summarized as follows:

- Invasion-of-privacy concerns with "worldwide" posting of addresses and employers of those who contribute to campaigns. Generally, it is accepted that such personal information should be redacted from the forms before they are posted.
- To be useful, the data in the forms should be searchable and the forms should be posted in a timely manner.
- Council must decide if on-line filing by candidates/officeholders is mandatory or optional and if mandatory, what is the impact on less experienced candidates—i.e., would they have to purchase expensive software to be able to file on-line? If filing on-line filing is optional, does the City Clerk's Office still have to post the paper filings on the web?
- The City's current in-house capacity to develop an interactive, on-line database to accept on-line filings, then display and maintain the data is clearly limited at this time.
- On-line filing and display of Lobbyist registration and disclosure forms is similar to campaign disclosure filing and there may be some advantages to developing parallel systems simultaneously, or develop one system to accommodate both types of filings.

There are a few options to consider:

Do it in-house: Redacting confidential information and scanning the disclosure forms would be a labor-intensive process and require an additional high-speed scanner. The quality of the scans would most likely be poor, especially when filled in by hand.

Out-source it: The State has mandated on-line filing for certain State filers and has approved a set of electronic standards, the CAL access format, for all software used for on-line filing. Many candidates or treasurers already use State-certified software for tracking their campaign and officeholder accounts. The State and other California government entities have already developed databases to accept and display on-line filing by candidates in a timely and useful manner. If the City issues an RFQ to solicit bids for software to accept and display on-line filings, the bidders most likely to submit lower bids would be those vendors who have already developed on-line filing capability for other governments. This should assure a more reasonable cost to the City than developing a whole system from scratch. The RFQ bid process would take approximately 8 weeks from inception to award of contract. This Office is aware of a vendor who provides on-line filing services for the County of Santa Clara and other large cities in the State. This out-source solution of having a vendor supply a service, instead of acquiring the software, may incur an on-going cost, but puts the responsibility of maintenance, upgrades and troubleshooting in the hands of the vendor and not the City, allowing us to benefit from the vendor's experience and economies of scale in providing the service to multiple agencies. Vendors providing a similar service could submit quotes in response to the RFQ, however it is noteworthy to mention that there appears to be few, if any, and other vendors providing this unique service. The estimated cost per year for the service is $35,000. Additional one-time set-up fees would be required to develop the database for the City's new lobbyist registration and reporting requirements.

Acquire software and do it in-house: Several City departments use records management software (FileNet) that could be customized for this process. Exact hardware and software costs are unknown at this time, but it is reasonable to project that the benefits would include lower on-going costs after the initial procurement of additional licenses, customization and training; as well the opportunity to acquire a software program that is designed to do so much more: image and archive all kinds of records, including ordinances, resolutions, contracts, policies, reports, etc. This option is worthy of additional consideration, however concerns about standardization surfaced as a result of the issue relating to the converged network for the new City Hall and we believed it prudent to allow the Administration to work through these issues before exploring this option further. Consequently, the alternative of contracting out is also pending given the need to adequately and sufficiently consider and compare costs and long-term benefits of both options.

Codification of the Council Policies

The opportunity to release an RFP for codification services for the Council Policy Manual is being explored. On-line access to this document should also be a high priority. The Council may eventually want to consider a consolidated review and update of the Manual, but in the meantime, making it more available and useful would be a tremendous asset.

Cross Training

Efforts to begin cross training in the Office have already begun. The Legislative Secretaries, who once only did the Minutes, are learning the Council Agenda process. Records Division clerks have taken on new responsibilities in legal publications and claims. All members of staff rotate "manning" the reception desk. This allows for full-time coverage, better customer service and provides additional learning for each member of the staff. Additionally, employees are receiving affordable (very low or no-cost) technical training on issues like the Brown Act, the Public Records Act, elections, records management, and other City Clerk Office related issues.

CONCLUSION

Although there is still much to do in the way of automation, there have been significant accomplishments to be proud of in the area of improved customer service. Partnerships with the Mayor's Office, City Manager's Office, the Council Liaison, and Call Center are enabling the City Clerk's Office to enhance services to the organization and to the public.

Acceptance of this report is requested. I would be happy to return in the future with additional updates.

LEE PRICE, CMC
CITY CLERK